



HOUSE BILL 335: Restore Last Saturday Early One-Stop.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	June 28, 2018
Introduced by:	Reps. Burr, K. Hall, Saine, Bumgardner	Prepared by:	Erika Churchill and Jessica Sammons, Staff Attorneys
Analysis of:	Second Edition		

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 335 would do the following:*

- *Restore early voting hours on the last Saturday before the elections, from 8:00 AM until 1:00 PM on that day required and from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM on that day optional;*
- *Allow a county with an inhabited barrier island accessible only by marine vessel to offer early voting sites on flexible days during the early voting period, under certain circumstances.*

CURRENT LAW: Generally, early voting is a term used to describe in-person absentee voting at "one stop" voting sites. Currently, any qualified voter of the State may vote by absentee ballot in a statewide primary, general, or special election and any qualified voter of a county is authorized to vote by absentee ballot in any primary or election conducted by the county board of elections (CBOE).

Absentee voting may take place at "one-stop" voting sites run by a county board of elections, either at the county board's office or other sites approved by the CBOE. Sites must be staffed by a member or a full-time employee of a CBOE. Sites must be approved by the State Board.

Prior to June 27, 2018, the period for early voting began on the third Thursday before an election and ran through 1:00 p.m. on the last Saturday before an election at the CBOE. A CBOE could vary hours by sites and by day of the week, provided that the plan was approved by the CBOE and by the State Board. The CBOE was required to calculate the cumulative number of scheduled voting hours at all one-stop sites during the 2012 primary and general elections, respectively, and provide at least the same number of hours offered in 2012 for one-stop voting in future elections which include a presidential candidate on the ballot through a combination of hours and numbers of one stop sites during the primary or general election. The CBOE was required to make the same calculation for the 2010 primary and general election and provide the same minimum number of hours as in that election at one-stop sites for elections not including a presidential election on the ballot.

Senate Bill 325, 2018 Regular Session, became law on June 27, 2018, and made the following changes with respect to early one-stop sites and hours:

- Early voting now begins no earlier than the third Wednesday before an election, and ends no later than 7:00 p.m. on the last Friday before the election. For the 2018 general election, these dates are October 17 through November 2.
- Establish hours for one-stop voting sites to be open as follows:

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- Monday through Friday – 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday – County board of elections are able to set hours for early voting on these days. If a county board of elections opens a one-stop voting site on Saturdays or Sundays during the early voting period, then all sites would be required to open for the same hours uniformly throughout the county on Saturdays or Sundays, respectively.
- Each one-stop voting site across the county must be open at that same location throughout the early voting period.
- Each day that the voting sites are open, the sites must be open uniformly throughout the county.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill would do all of the following:

- For the 2018 election only, require early one-stop voting sites to be open 8:00 AM until 1:00 PM on the last Saturday before the election.
- For the 2018 election only, permit counties to opt to open early one-stop voting sites from 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM on the last Saturday before the election.
- Establish flexibility for a county board of elections in a county with an inhabited barrier island that is accessible only by marine vessel to open early one-stop voting sites on that barrier island on days and times different from those on the mainland in that county.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when it becomes law.